



Standards  
& Testing  
Agency

# 2015 maladministration report

**National curriculum assessments at key  
stages 1 and 2**

**November 2016**

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## Introduction

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) has a statutory duty to investigate any matter brought to its attention concerning the accuracy of key stage 1 (KS1) and key stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum tests and assessments results, including the phonics screening check. These instances were investigated in partnership with local authorities (LAs) in accordance with the [‘Maladministration investigation procedures’](#).

The term 'maladministration' refers to any act that could jeopardise the integrity, security or confidentiality of the national curriculum assessments and could lead to results that do not reflect the unaided abilities of pupils. This could refer to a range of actions, including test papers being incorrectly opened, pupils cheating, over-aiding of pupils by test administrators, changes being made to a pupil's test script by someone other than the pupil or inflation / deflation of teacher assessment judgements.

Following an investigation, if STA's maladministration team finds that the accuracy or correctness of a pupil's test results is in doubt, a senior manager within STA decides whether to amend or annul results.

This report details the numbers, sources and types of allegations of maladministration reported to STA throughout the 2015 test cycle across KS1 and KS2. It also presents the numbers of amendments and annulments to results made in 2015. Comparisons are made with the maladministration data from 2013 and 2014.

# National curriculum assessments in 2015

## Number of schools participating

In 2015, 15,991 schools participated in the KS2 national curriculum tests at levels 3-5 (L3-5) and teacher assessment. Of these, 11,622 also participated in the level 6 (L6) English reading test: 11,483 in the L6 English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests; and 13,675 in the L6 mathematics tests.

16,293 schools were eligible for the KS1 phonics screening check and end of KS1 assessments in 2015.

## Changes to assessment in 2015

There were a number of changes to the KS2 assessments in 2015:

- All KS2 national curriculum tests were marked on screen.
- Schools notified STA of the use of a scribe or a transcribe by submitting an online notification form. This was different from 2014, when schools were required to print the forms and send to markers with the test scripts.
- The format of the L3-5 mental mathematics paper was amended by making it double-sided.
- The L6 grammar, punctuation and spelling test had an additional sheet in the answer booklet in case pupils required extra paper.
- Schools were provided with a sealable transparent bag to keep the test papers in following the administration of each test. This was to keep them secure until they were packaged in the external bag and sent for marking.

## Maladministration investigation procedures

The '[Maladministration investigation procedures](#)' guidance did not change between 2014 and 2015.

As has been the case in previous assessment cycles, decisions upon the conclusion of an investigation were made by a senior manager of STA.

## Main findings from 2015

- There was a decrease in the number of alleged KS1 and KS2 maladministration cases reported to STA in 2015 compared to 2014 (see Table 1) from 595 to 489.
- The number of allegations about the KS1 phonics screening check remained low (44 allegations). The total number of cases represented 0.27% of the total number of schools that participated in the assessment.

- The number of allegations concerning KS1 teacher assessment was also low (16 cases), representing a total of 0.10% of the total number of schools that participated.
- The number of schools investigated following a maladministration allegation was 429. This represents 2.68% of the total number of schools that participated in the KS2 national curriculum assessments. Of these cases, 54.1% were self-reported by schools.
- A new approach was trialled in 2015, in which STA focussed its investigation on one paper sat by pupils at a subset of schools. This activity identified 27 schools where maladministration was identified. Of these schools, 20 had changes made to their results (see page 9 for further details).
- 0.53% of schools that participated in the KS2 assessments (85 in total) received amendments to, or annulments of, their results. Of these, 7 schools had a whole cohort annulment of at least one KS2 subject.

## Breakdown of maladministration cases in 2015

The table below details the number of cases of maladministration reported at each key stage from 2013 to 2015.

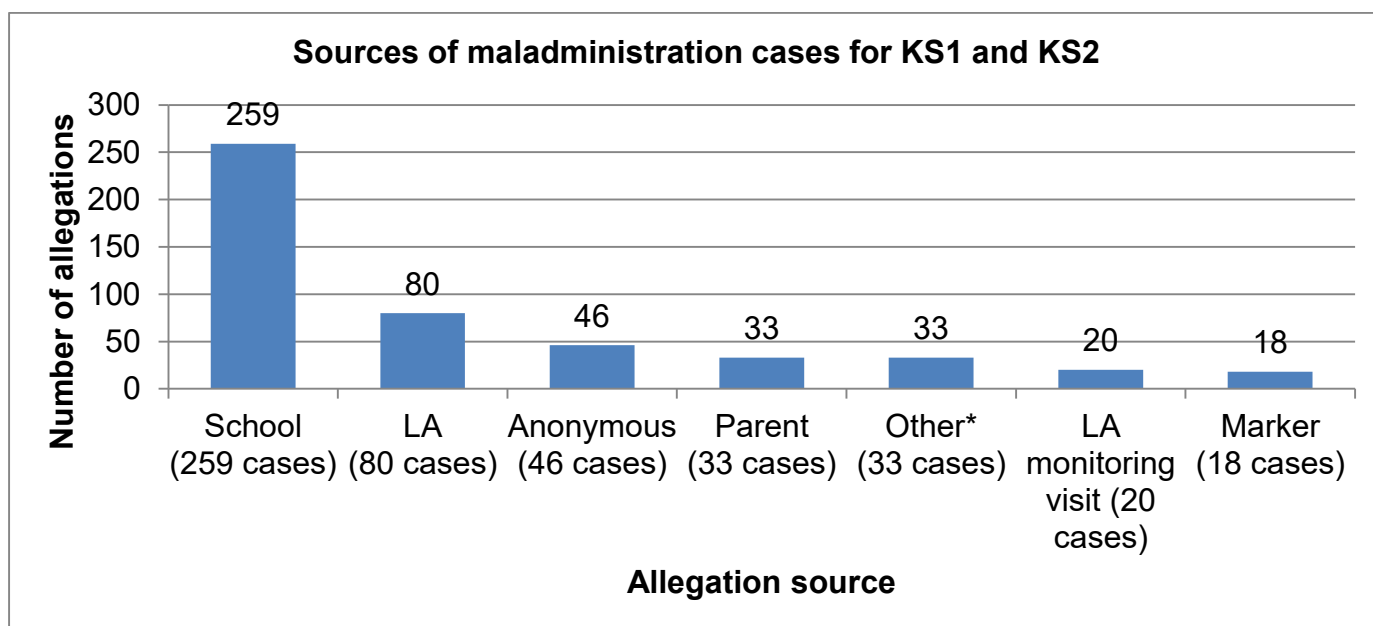
**Table 1: Total reported<sup>1</sup> maladministration cases at KS1 and KS2**

Year	Total reported cases at KS1	% of total number of participating schools	Total reported cases at KS2 <sup>2</sup>	% of total number of participating schools
2013	73	0.46	438	2.72
2014	89	0.55	506	3.26
2015	60	0.37	429	2.68

## Sources of reported maladministration cases

Cases of alleged maladministration are reported to STA from a number of different sources. Across KS1 and KS2, schools self-reported 53.0% of cases. 20.4% of cases were reported by LAs, including those reported as a result of LA monitoring visits.

**Diagram 1: Sources of reported cases in 2015**



<sup>1</sup> This figure does not include cases identified from the review of the subset schools, as an allegation had not been made in these cases.

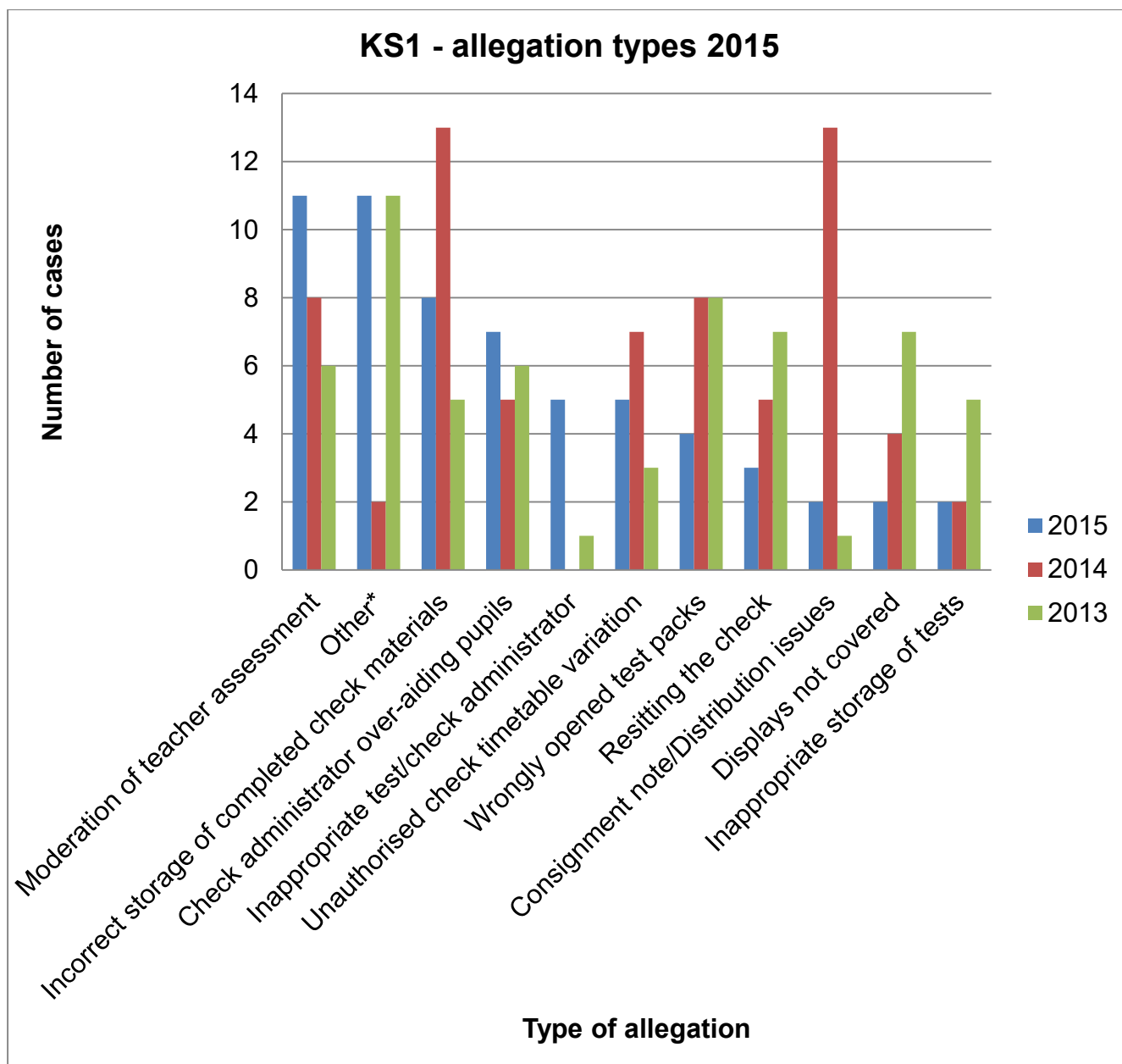
<sup>2</sup> The total reported cases at KS2 (this figure may include multiple allegations and cases for one individual school).

\* Please note: 'Other' sources within diagram 1 include teacher informers, teachers from another school and governing bodies.

## Key stage 1 maladministration findings

Forty four allegations were reported about the administration of the phonics screening check and 16 allegations about KS1 tests and teacher assessment. The graph below gives a breakdown of allegations by type.

**Diagram 2: Allegation types at KS1**



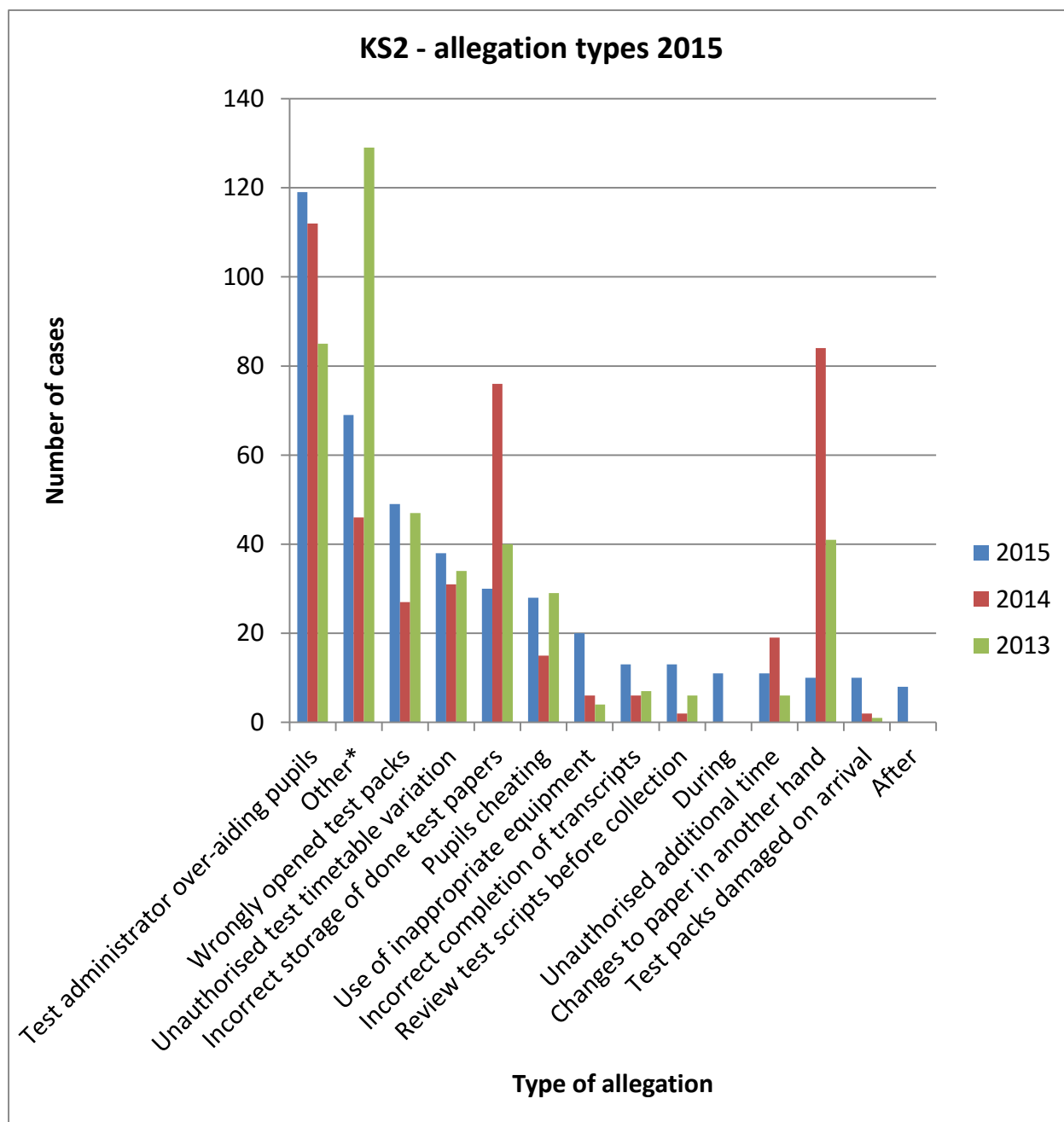
\* Please note: 'Other' allegation types within Diagram 2 include coaching of pupils, early opening of materials without permission, unsupervised breaks, test packs damaged on arrival, test security breach and check administered early. Fewer than 5 allegations were received for each of these allegation types.

The largest number of allegations at KS1 were about test administration and teacher assessment at KS1. These involved allegations of coaching pupils before their KS1 tasks and tests, of schools inflating or deflating their KS1 teacher assessment, and test administrators over-aiding pupils during their KS1 tasks and tests.

## Key stage 2 maladministration findings

A total of 429 allegations of maladministration were received for KS2: 422 about the tests; 7 for teacher assessment.

**Diagram 3: Allegation types at KS2**



\* Please note: 'other' allegations within Diagram 3 include inappropriate use of a reader/prompter, moderation of teacher assessment, displays not covered, incorrect papers given to pupils, consignment note issues, changed marked scripts before review, early opening without permission to photocopy, inappropriate time allocation, inappropriate storage of tests, resitting the tests, unsupervised break, early opening without permission, inappropriate test administrator, over emphasising the spelling / overactive reader / overactive translator, coaching of pupils, lost test materials, test administered early and test security breach during and after test administration. Fewer than 10 allegations were received for each of these allegation types.



The most common allegation type in 2015 was regarding test administrators over-aiding pupils equating to 119 cases.

The biggest difference between 2014 and 2015 has been seen in the allegation type 'changes to paper in another hand'. This type of allegation is generally made by markers. Following changes to on-screen marking in 2015, allegations of this type have reduced. STA addressed this by trialling a way to identify maladministration in 2015 by reviewing a subset of schools' KS2 test papers.

## **Changes to identifying maladministration in 2015**

STA trialled a new approach to identify maladministration in 2015. This involved reviewing test papers from a subset of schools and resulted in 400 schools' KS2 mental mathematics papers being reviewed to identify possible maladministration.

Maladministration was identified in 27 of the schools papers that were reviewed; this equates to 6.75% of those reviewed as part of this approach and 0.17% of all schools that participated in the KS2 national curriculum assessments. Twenty of these 27 schools had amendments made to their results.

Please note that these figures for maladministration have not already been included within the data provided previously in this report. This is because it is for a specific test paper, rather than all assessments, and a non-representative group of schools, so it is not possible to generalise the findings.

## **Amendments to, and annulments of, test results**

Following an investigation, if STA finds that the accuracy of a pupil's test results is in doubt, a senior manager makes a decision to amend or annul results and communicates this to the school.

Where a school believes a pupil has gained an advantage as a result of cheating, the headteacher notifies STA of the incident. In doing this, they agree to the removal of marks for the specific questions where the pupil has gained an advantage or the annulment of the pupil's paper.

## **Amendment and annulment breakdown by school**

In summary, for KS2 in 2015:

- 18 schools either had pupils' KS2 test results amended or annulled after notifying STA of a pupil cheating
- 47 schools either had pupils' results amended or annulled as a result of maladministration, which had been reported to STA as an allegation and, of these, 7 schools had a whole cohort annulment for at least one subject

- 20 schools, which were included within the subset of schools, either had pupils' results amended or annulled due to maladministration identified on test scripts

**Table 2: Number of KS2 schools with amendments or annulments to results from 2013 to 2015**

Year	Schools with whole cohort annulments of at least 1 subject	Schools with individual pupil annulments / amendments to results in at least 1 subject	% of all cases at KS2
2013	37	51	19.2
2014	41	74	22.3
2015	7	78	18.6 <sup>3</sup>

It is not possible to make direct comparisons between 2013, 2014 and 2015 data. A number of cases in 2013 and 2014 resulted in both the annulment for a whole cohort in at least one subject and the annulment or amendment to results for individual pupils. In 2015, this was not the case; the outcome of cases resulted in either a whole cohort annulment in at least one subject or the annulment or amendment to results for individual pupils.

In 2015, approximately 0.53% of schools that participated in the KS2 assessments had their results amended. There is a 3.7 percentage point decrease between maladministration cases in 2014 and 2015, which resulted in an amendment or annulment of a school's KS2 results.

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<sup>3</sup> 18.6% is the total percentage of all maladministration cases at KS2. This includes the 429 cases of maladministration reported to STA, and the 27 cases of maladministration identified within the subset of schools reviewed as part of a new approach to identifying maladministration in 2015.



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